

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 18660 01 OF 03 100555Z
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AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 MOSCOW 18660

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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT PARA 3 LINE 12)

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 18660 01 OF 03 100555Z

SUBJECT: SOVIET DIPLOMACY RE PAK-AFGHAN BORDER
PROBLEMS

SUMMARY: COMMENTS BY SOVIET MFA PAKISTAN DESK
OFFICER STRONGLY SUGGEST THAT SOVIETS ARE EXPLOITING
PAK CONCERNS OVER AFGHANISTAN TO DRAW ISLAMABAD
CLOSER TO MOSCOW AND AWAY FROM THE U.S. MOSCOW'S

SUCCESS MAY TO A LARGE EXTENT DEPEND ON ITS ABILITY TO GET AFGHANISTAN TO THE CONFERENCE TABLE FOR SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS ON THE PAK-AFGHAN BORDER PROBLEM. IT IS APPARENT HERE THAT SOVIETS ARE HOPING THAT THEIR CURRENT DIPLOMACY WILL PROVIDE IMPORTANT BENEFITS IN SOVIET-PAK RELATIONS AND WITH RESPECT TO SOVIET POSITION IN SOUTH ASIA GENERALLY. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBOFF CALLED ON SOVIET MFA PAKISTAN DESK OFFICER VOINOV AUGUST 4. MOST OF THE NINETY MINUTE DISCUSSION FOCUSED ON PAKISTAN'S RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION AND AFGHANISTAN.

2. VOINOV BEGAN BY STATING THAT THE ISHAQ KHAN/ AGHA SHAHI TALKS IN MOSCOW WERE WARM AND FRIENDLY. BOTH SIDES REGISTERED THEIR STRONG INTEREST IN EXPANDING ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL RELATIONS. VOINOV THEN BEGAN TO READ THROUGH TWO PAGES OF HANDWRITTEN NOTES ON THE RESULTS OF THE MOSCOW TALKS. THE FIRST ONE-THIRD DEALT WITH A DESCRIPTION OF THE TWO SIDES' AGREEMENT TO INCREASE THE SCALE OF SOVIET-PAKISTAN ECONOMIC "COOPERATION" THROUGH ADDITIONAL SOVIET ASSISTANCE FOR THE KARACHI STEEL MILL.

3. PUTTING DOWN HIS NOTES, VOINOV STATED THAT
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 18660 01 OF 03 100555Z

AGHA SHAHI'S PARTICIPATION PROVIDED A POLITICAL DIMENSION TO THE NEGOTIATIONS, WHICH WERE ORIGINALLY PROPOSED BY ISLAMABAD. SHAHI HAD REQUESTED THAT HIS TALKS BE ARRANGED WITH HIS OLD PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCE AT THE UNITED NATIONS (NOW WORKING ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS), YAKOB MALIK. READING FROM THE REMAINDER OF HIS PREPARED NOTES, VOINOV CONTINUED THAT AGHA SHAHI STATED THAT:

-- PAKISTAN IS INTERESTED IN IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH MOSCOW;

-- PAKISTAN DESIRES TO JOIN THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT (NAM) AND (IN VOINOV'S WORDS) TO MAKE "A CHANGE OVER (PEREKHOD) FROM ONE PATH TO ANOTHER PATH."

-- PAKISTAN CONTINUES TO STRIVE FOR BETTER RELATIONS WITH AFGHANISTAN AND, SINCE THE KABUL COUP, HAS CONTINUALLY APPROACHED THE NEW AFGHAN GOVERNMENT TO REQUEST THAT THE "ONE OUTSTANDING ISSUE" BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES BE SOLVED BY NEGOTIATIONS, EITHER IN KABUL OR ISLAMABAD. THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT HAS

NOT YET ACCEPTED THIS INVITATION; AND

-- PAKISTAN ALSO CONTINUES TO WORK TOWARD FURTHER
NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS IN THE REGION GENERALLY,
INCLUDING IN INDO-PAK RELATIONS. SHAHI REVIEWED
PROGRESS IN THIS LATTER AREA OVER THE PAST YEAR,
OUTLINED THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF VAJPAYEE'S TRIP TO
PAKISTAN, AND STRESSED ISLAMABAD'S DETERMINATION
TO CONTINUE THE SIMLA NORMALIZATION PROCESS.
ON BEHALF OF THE SOVIET SIDE, YAKOB MALIK:

-- EMPHASIZED THAT THE SOVIET UNION "SHARES"

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 18660 02 OF 03 072031Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 INRE-00
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S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 03 MOSCOW 18660

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PAKISTAN'S DESIRE TO IMPROVE SOVIET-PAK RELATIONS;

-- WELCOMES PAKISTAN'S DESIRE TO ENTER THE NAM; AND

-- FULLY SUPPORTS THE PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF PAK-
AFGHAN DIFFERENCES THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS.

4. EMBOFF ASKED VOINOV IF HE CONSIDERED PAKISTAN'S
MOVING "FROM ONE PATH TO ANOTHER" AS NECESSITATING
PAKISTAN'S WITHDRAWAL FROM CENTO. VOINOV RESPONDED
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SECRET

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 18660 02 OF 03 072031Z

AFFIRMATIVELY. HE DEPICTED STANDARD SOVIET VIEW OF
CENTO MEMBERSHIP AS PLACING PAKISTAN IN THE "MILI-
TARY BLOC" CATEGORY, AND NAM MEMBERSHIP AS
EXCLUDING INCLUSION IN "MILITARY BLOCS." IN
ENSUING EXCHANGE ON THIS TOPIC, HOWEVER, HE ATTEMPTED
TO SHIFT THE BASIS FOR HIS CONCLUSION ON PAKISTAN'S
WITHDRAWAL FROM CENTO TO NAM'S OWN
CRITERIA FOR NAM MEMBERSHIP, WHILE STRESSING THAT,
THROUGH ITS REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN NAM AND
ITS PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS, PAKISTAN HAS CLEARLY
REGISTERED ITS "INTEREST" IN JOINING NAM, WHICH
IN TURN, MEANS MEETING THESE CRITERIA.

5. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS, VOINOV VERY STRONGLY
EMPHASIZED MOSCOW'S BACKING FOR A SETTLEMENT OF THE
PUSHTUNISTAN ISSUE THROUGH PAK-AFGHAN NEGOTIATIONS.
HE STATED HIS CERTAINTY THAT THE ISSUE CAN BE SOLVED
THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS AND THAT NEGOTIATIONS WOULD
START "MAYBE TOMORROW, MAYBE NEXT MONTH, MAYBE AFTER
SOME TIME," BUT THEY WILL START. A PEACEFUL SOLU-
TION OF THE DISPUTE WOULD BE IN THE INTERESTS OF
REGIONAL AND WORLD-WIDE PEACE AND SECURITY, HE
REMARKED. HE CITED THE NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT OF
THE SOVIET-IRAN BORDER PROBLEM AS A PRECEDENT.

6. IN RESPONSE TO FURTHER QUESTIONING, VOINOV STATED
THAT:

-- HE HAD NOT YET READ AFGHAN FOREIGN MINISTER AMIN'S
BELGRADE SPEECH;

-- MOSCOW SEES NO REASON "TO TAKE A STAND" ON THE
DURAND LINE AS THE PAK-AFGHAN BORDER. HE SAID
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 MOSCOW 18660 02 OF 03 072031Z

ISLAMABAD AND KABUL SHOULD DETERMINE WHERE THEIR
BORDER LIES; AND

-- THE AFGHAN LEADERSHIP'S PREOCCUPATION WITH INTERNAL MATTERS HAS PROBABLY CONTRIBUTED TO KABUL'S LACK OF RESPONSE TO PAKISTAN'S INVITATION TO HOLD TALKS ON PUSHTUNISTAN.

7. COMMENT: THE TENOR AND SUBSTANCE OF VOINOV'S REMARKS INDICATE THAT:

-- SOVIETS ARE ATTEMPTING TO PORTRAY TO US (AND MAY THEMSELVES TO AN IMPORTANT DEGREE CONSIDER) THAT THE PRESSURES FOR IMPROVING SOVIET-PAK RELATIONS AND ISLAMABAD'S DESIRE TO LEAVE "THE MILITARY BLOC" CATEGORY AND MOVE INTO THE NAM FAMILY STEM FROM ISLAMABAD'S OWN INITIATIVES AS WELL AS "OBJECTIVE" CONDITIONS IN THE REGION ITSELF, RATHER THAN ON INITIATIVES OR MANEUVERINGS BY MOSCOW. IN OTHER WORDS, LIKE THE APRIL 27 KABUL COUP, THE SOVIETS ARE SUGGESTING THAT THESE DEVELOPMENTS ARE PRODUCTS OF "INEVITABLE" AND "POSITIVE" EVOLUTIONARY TRENDS - PRODUCED BY LOCAL CONDITIONS - THAT MOSCOW SUPPORTS BUT HAS NOT ITSELF INITIATED;

-- SOVIETS ARE, IN FACT, ATTEMPTING TO EXPLOIT PAK CONCERNS ABOUT AFGHAN/SOVIET INTENTIONS AND POTENTIAL MISCHIEF-MAKING IN PUSHTUNISTAN AND BALUCHISTAN TO DRAW ISLAMABAD CLOSER TO MOSCOW AND AWAY FROM THE U.S. THROUGH (A) MOSCOW'S ACTIVE SUPPORT FOR PAK-AFGHAN NEGOTIATIONS; AND, (B) INCREASES IN

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SECRET

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SECRET

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 18660 03 OF 03 072036Z
ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T SECTION 03 OF 03 MOSCOW 18660

EXDIS / LIMDIS

SOVIET ECONOMIC AID FOR THE TROUBLED PAK ECONOMY
AT A TIME WHEN THE U.S. IS NOT FORTHCOMING;
-- SOVIETS MAY ALSO HOPE TO USE THIS TASHKENT-TYPE
DIPLOMACY TO IMPROVE MOSCOW'S BONA FIDES AS A
NEIGHBOR HELPFUL AND NOT THREATENING TO THE
REGION, AND EVEN AS AN ACCEPTED PARTICIPANT IN
REGIONAL AFFAIRS. WE ASSUME THAT MOSCOW IS
KEEPING INDIA CLOSELY INFORMED OF ITS EFFORTS TO
GET PAK-AFGHAN NEGOTIATIONS OFF THE GROUND. AT
THE SAME TIME, THE SOVIETS MAY SEE AN IMPROVING
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 MOSCOW 18660 03 OF 03 072036Z

SOVIET-PAK RELATIONSHIP AS A BRAKE ON DELHI'S
MOVEMENT TOWARD BETTER RELATIONS WITH PEKING AND
WASHINGTON AND AN IRRITANT IN PRC-PAK RELATIONS.
FURTHER, AS MENTIONED MOSCOW 10030, THE SOVIETS MAY
SEE THEIR EFFORTS IN ASSISTING THE CONSOLIDATION
OF POWER (WITH LARGE-SCALE SOVIET ECONOMIC AND
OTHER SUPPORT) OF THE NEW PRD-SOVIET AFGHAN LEADER-
SHIP AS BEST SERVED BY KEEPING THE LID ON THE
CONTENTIOUS PUSHTUNISTAN ISSUE AT THE PRESENT
TIME. IN THE LONGER RUN, MOSCOW'S AMBIGUOUS
POSITION ON THE PAK-AFGHAN BORDER GIVES IT FLEXI-
BILITY TO MODERATE OR HARDEN ITS POSITION ON
THIS ISSUE.

8. IN SUM, IT APPEARS FROM HERE AS THOUGH THE
SOVIETS ARE SKILLFULLY PLAYING THEIR CARDS TO
USE THE RECENT AFGHAN EVENTS TO THEIR ADVANTAGE
INSOVIET-PAK RELATIONS AND IN ENHANCING MOSCOW'S
IMAGE IN SOUTH ASIA. THE ACTUAL INFLUENCE THE
SOVIETS MAY WIELD IN KABUL, PARTICULARLY ON THE
SENSITIVE PUSHTUNISTAN ISSUE, MAY BE PIVOTAL TO
THE SUCCESS OF SOVIET OBJECTIVES. TOON

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